

HOUSE BILL 744

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By: **Delegates Rosenberg, Carter, Hammen, McHale, and Oaks**

Introduced and read first time: February 5, 2010

Assigned to: Economic Matters

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Electricity – Competitive Supply – Information**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the Public Service Commission to disseminate certain
4 information about competitive electricity supply in a certain manner; requiring
5 the Commission to establish a certain workgroup to advise the Commission on
6 certain matters; requiring the publication of certain information concerning
7 competitive supply in a certain manner; authorizing certain information to be
8 made available in certain manners; requiring certain information to be updated
9 at certain intervals; requiring certain electricity suppliers to provide certain
10 information to the Commission at certain times; authorizing the Commission to
11 impose an assessment on certain electric companies and electricity suppliers in
12 a certain manner for certain purposes; and generally relating to electricity and
13 the dissemination of information about the availability of competitive electricity
14 supply.

15 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
16 Article – Public Utility Companies
17 Section 7–504 and 7–505(a)(1)
18 Annotated Code of Maryland
19 (2008 Replacement Volume and 2009 Supplement)

20 BY adding to
21 Article – Public Utility Companies
22 Section 7–505(f)
23 Annotated Code of Maryland
24 (2008 Replacement Volume and 2009 Supplement)

25 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
26 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

27 **Article – Public Utility Companies**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 7-504.

2 The General Assembly finds and declares that the purpose of this subtitle is to:

3 (1) establish customer choice of electricity supply and electricity
4 supply services;

5 (2) create competitive retail electricity supply and electricity supply
6 services markets;

7 (3) deregulate the generation, supply, and pricing of electricity;

8 (4) provide economic benefits for all customer classes; and

9 (5) ensure compliance with federal and State environmental
10 standards.

11 7-505.

12 (a) (1) In assessing and approving each electric company's restructuring
13 plan, and overseeing the transition process and regulation of the restructured electric
14 industry, the Commission shall provide that the transition to a competitive electricity
15 supply and electricity supply services market shall be orderly, maintain electric
16 system reliability, and ensure compliance with federal and State environmental
17 regulations, be fair to customers, electric company investors, customers of municipal
18 electric utilities, electric companies, and electricity suppliers, and provide economic
19 benefits to all customer classes.

20 **(F) (1) (I) ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2011, THE COMMISSION**
21 **SHALL IMPLEMENT A CONSUMER EDUCATION PROGRAM INFORMING**
22 **CUSTOMERS OF CHANGES IN THE ELECTRIC INDUSTRY AND OF THE**
23 **AVAILABILITY OF COMPETITIVE SUPPLY OF ELECTRICITY IN EACH SERVICE**
24 **TERRITORY.**

25 **(II) THE COMMISSION SHALL DEVELOP THE PROGRAM WITH**
26 **THE ADVICE OF A WORKGROUP CONSISTING OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE**
27 **COMMISSION STAFF, THE OFFICE OF PEOPLE'S COUNSEL, THE OFFICE OF THE**
28 **ATTORNEY GENERAL, ELECTRIC COMPANIES, LICENSED ELECTRICITY**
29 **SUPPLIERS, RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS, SMALL AND MEDIUM COMMERCIAL**
30 **CUSTOMERS, SMALL AND MEDIUM INDUSTRIAL CUSTOMERS, AND OTHER**
31 **APPROPRIATE INTERESTS.**

32 **(III) ANY WORKGROUP CREATED UNDER THIS PARAGRAPH**
33 **SHALL INCLUDE AT LEAST TWO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.**

1 **(2) (I) AS PART OF THE CONSUMER EDUCATION PROGRAM**
2 **UNDER THIS SUBSECTION, THE COMMISSION SHALL DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN**
3 **WEB-BASED INFORMATION REGARDING RATES AND SERVICES FOR SMALL**
4 **COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL ELECTRIC CUSTOMERS OF LICENSED**
5 **ELECTRICITY SUPPLIERS.**

6 **(II) THE INFORMATION REQUIRED IN THIS PARAGRAPH**
7 **SHALL INCLUDE:**

8 **1. NAMES, ADDRESSES, AND CURRENT CONTACT**
9 **INFORMATION FOR ELECTRICITY SUPPLIERS LICENSED IN THE STATE,**
10 **INCLUDING WEBSITES AND ELECTRONIC MAIL ADDRESSES;**

11 **2. IDENTIFICATION OF LICENSED ELECTRICITY**
12 **SUPPLIERS THAT ARE ACTIVELY SOLICITING NEW SMALL COMMERCIAL AND**
13 **RESIDENTIAL ELECTRIC CUSTOMERS IN THE STATE;**

14 **3. AN ACTIVE WEB-BASED TOOL TO ALLOW**
15 **CUSTOMERS TO SEARCH FOR AVAILABLE COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY**
16 **OFFERS ON THE BASIS OF THE CUSTOMER'S JURISDICTION OR ZIP CODE;**

17 **4. A LIST OF FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS, AND**
18 **THE ANSWERS, PERTAINING TO COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY AND**
19 **STANDARD OFFER SERVICE; AND**

20 **5. ACTIVE LINKS TO THE WEBSITES OF ELECTRIC**
21 **COMPANIES, LICENSED ELECTRICITY SUPPLIERS, AND OTHER RELEVANT**
22 **ENTITIES.**

23 **(III) THE INFORMATION REQUIRED IN THIS PARAGRAPH**
24 **SHALL BE:**

25 **1. READILY UNDERSTANDABLE AND FORMATTED TO**
26 **PROVIDE A COMPARISON OF RATES AND SERVICES AMONG ELECTRICITY**
27 **SUPPLIERS OF SIMILAR SERVICES;**

28 **2. MADE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC THROUGH**
29 **PUBLICATION ON THE COMMISSION'S WEBSITE OR ON AN INDEPENDENT**
30 **TOP-LEVEL WEBSITE TO WHICH A PROMINENT LINK IS PLACED ON THE**
31 **COMMISSION'S HOME PAGE; AND**

32 **3. MAINTAINED IN A CURRENT STATE THROUGH**
33 **UPDATES:**

1 A. ON AT LEAST A MONTHLY BASIS, FOR
2 INFORMATION ON COMPETITIVE SUPPLY OFFERS; AND

3 B. ON AT LEAST A QUARTERLY BASIS, FOR
4 LICENSING AND CONTACT INFORMATION.

5 (3) IN ADDITION TO THE WEB-BASED INFORMATION REQUIRED
6 UNDER PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, THE CONSUMER EDUCATION
7 PROGRAM MAY ALSO EMPLOY BILL INSERTS, ADVERTISEMENTS IN PRINT AND
8 OTHER MEDIA, AND OTHER APPROPRIATE MEANS TO ADVISE SMALL
9 COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS OF THE AVAILABILITY OF
10 CUSTOMER CHOICE AND THE MEANS TO EXERCISE IT IN AN INFORMED MANNER.

11 (4) AN ELECTRICITY SUPPLIER SHALL PROVIDE TO THE
12 COMMISSION CURRENT AND ACCURATE INFORMATION ABOUT THE
13 ELECTRICITY SUPPLIER'S ACTIVE COMPETITIVE SUPPLY OFFERS:

14 (i) WHENEVER THE ELECTRICITY SUPPLIER ESTABLISHES
15 A NEW OFFER PROGRAM OR ENDS AN OFFER PROGRAM; AND

16 (ii) AT ANY OTHER TIME ON REQUEST OF THE COMMISSION.

17 (5) THE COMMISSION MAY MAKE AN ASSESSMENT IN
18 ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-110 OF THIS ARTICLE, ONLY ON ELECTRIC COMPANIES
19 AND ELECTRICITY SUPPLIERS, TO FUND THE IMPLEMENTATION AND
20 MAINTENANCE OF THE CUSTOMER EDUCATION PROGRAM UNDER THIS
21 SUBSECTION.

22 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
23 July 1, 2010.